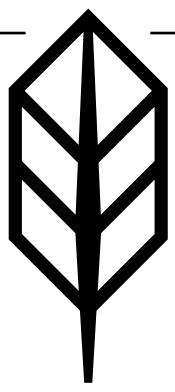


The Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County (PSABC) was formed in 1976, with interest in preservation sparked by observance of the US Bicentennial, and in response to threats to local buildings and sites posed by neglect, insensitive alteration, and large-scale transportation projects. Disinvestment in downtown, plans for the open cut through Beaucatcher Mountain, and a proposal to turn Montford Avenue into a through street connecting to U.S.19-23 spurred formation of the volunteer

group, which quickly incorporated and initiated work as a community non-profit. The Society advocated to City Council and County Commission to establish a joint city-county local landmark and historic district commission, to designate Montford as a local historic district, and to provide matching funds for local survey of historic buildings and sites. These actions made possible the historic designation of numerous sites and districts, and contributed to downtown revitalization and preservation of historic places county-wide.



Pebbledash

PRESERVATION
SOCIETY OF
ASHEVILLE
AND BUNCOMBE CO.

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF ASHEVILLE AND BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Fall 2023

PSABC's Time Traveling Gala a Big Success!

After a four-year hiatus, the Time Traveling Gala was finally back this year with a trip to the Enchanted Forest. The party visited three stunning 1920's homes in Biltmore Forest and enjoyed libations, bites and live entertainment along the way. We never get sick of hearing that it is the best party in Asheville!

The Time Traveling Gala is more than just a fun party though – the funds from this event make our work possible. Sponsorships and ticket sales support our day-to-day operations and in addition, we ask guests at the event to raise their hands in support of our Preservation Grant Program. This year, our friends and partners at The Biltmore Company joined us to announce that they would match all donations to this program up to \$35,000! The generosity of The Biltmore Company inspired the crowd and we raised in excess of \$44,000 plus the full match!

We are endlessly grateful to The Biltmore Company and all of our sponsors, our homeowners, our guests, our volunteers and our Time Traveling Gala founder and Chair, Cynthia Watson for this amazing night.

And now, we plan for the next one... save the date for September 28, 2024! 🍀



MATCHING GIFT FROM THE BILTMORE COMPANY RESULTS IN BIGGEST GRANT ROUND YET!

\$29,100 in Preservation Grants to Help Support 6 Historic Projects. Thanks to a \$35,000 matching gift from The Biltmore Company we are happy to announce our biggest grant round to date. We are honored to have the support of The Biltmore Company for this program!



Shiloh AME Zion Church

BRICKS-AND-MORTAR: Shiloh AME Zion Church

\$5,000 for HVAC system replacement at Shiloh African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Shiloh African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church is a historically important church. The existing heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system in the church is 28 years old and has failed twice this year. While HVAC systems are not typically considered preservation projects, the failure of the heating system in winter could potentially lead to significant damage to the historic fabric. We are excited to support this project that will allow the building to remain open and serve its congregation and community for several years to come.

From the application: *Shiloh African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is one of the oldest A.M.E. Zion churches continually serving a predominately African American congregation in the Asheville area. The earliest reference to the church is recorded in an 1871 deed referring to the sale of one acre of land to the trustees of the church. In 1889, the congregation sold the church and church property to the agent for the Biltmore Estate for \$1000. This sale allowed the congregation to move a church building and their historic cemetery to their current locations. The building that was moved served the congregation until 1928 when they erected a new brick church (the current building) on the 1889 site.*

BRICKS-AND-MORTAR: Bascom Lamar Lunsford Homestead

\$5,000 for the replacement of the roof at Bascom Lamar Lunsford Homestead.

Bascom Lamar Lunsford was a musician, folklorist, and musical festival organizer, which included the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival. Lunsford worked in many different professions over the years. As a salesman, he traveled through the mountains, where he developed his vast repertoire of traditional songs and tunes.

His historic 1938 home is located in Leicester. Its current roof is over 30 years old and is badly deteriorated and leaking. We are happy to fund this project to save this building for future generations.

From the application: *It is the old homestead of Bascom Lamar Lunsford - "Minstrel of the Appalachians" and future home of The Pondering Bascom Performing Arts & Education Center. We are a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, promotion and continued education in traditional Appalachian performing arts, cultural arts, regional history and sustainable lifestyle practices.*

PUBLIC EDUCATION: Riverside Cemetery

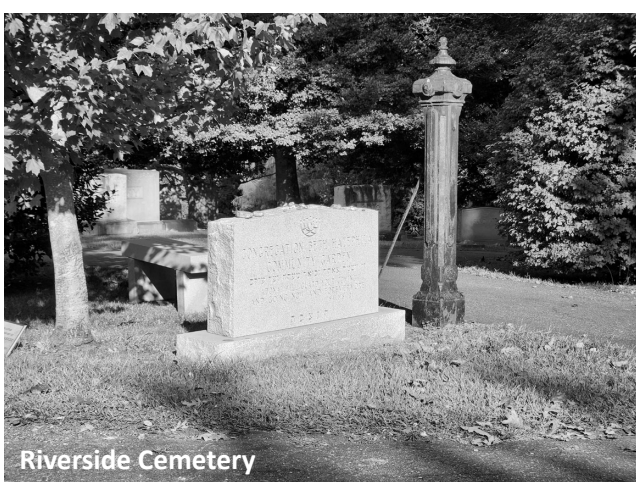
\$4,100 for the research, fabrication, and installation of an interpretive history panel in the Congregation Beth HaTephila section of Riverside Cemetery.

The history of Asheville's Jewish community has long been ignored. Sharon Fahrner is working to document the history of the Jewish community and their contributions to the culture of Asheville. As part of this ongoing project, Fahrner plans to research the history of the Congregation Beth HaTephila section of Riverside Cemetery and Jewish burial rituals. This research will be turned into an interpretive history panel to share this important history with visitors to the cemetery. We are pleased about the installation of the interpretation panel.

From the application: *Visitors from outside the South often are surprised there are Jewish communities in the Southeast and are especially surprised to find them in the Appalachian Mountains. Riverside Cemetery, a Victorian rural garden cemetery, offers a look at the final resting place of people who shaped Asheville. This project will expand awareness and understanding of the history of Asheville's Jewish community. It will explain the purpose, some burial rituals, and the story of how the cemetery belonging to the Congregation Beth HaTephila (CBHT) was located within Riverside Cemetery. CBHT is the only religious institution that has a cemetery within Riverside. Recognition of the existence of a Jewish community in Asheville was long ignored.*



Bascom Lamar Lunsford Homestead



Riverside Cemetery

The grants continue on page 2

From the Executive Director



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends, Back in 2018, we began talking about creating a Preservation Grant Program. It seemed like a good way to make preservation more accessible to both our rural and historically excluded communities and to give the community a preservation tool that they could direct. We set an annual budget of \$20,000 in grant awards and crossed our fingers that we could raise those funds at our Time Traveling Gala in the fall of 2018 – and we did! Then we crossed our fingers that we would get applications worth funding – and again, we did!

In 2019, we funded \$23,000 in grants to six projects. We knew we wanted to take risks, fund small projects and provide funding when there might not be other options available. In that first year, we funded two bricks and mortar projects, emergency plumbing repairs and a foundation stabilization, three public education programs and one National Register of Historic Places nomination. To our delight, all of these projects were successfully completed and our grant program finally felt like a reality.

Since then, the program has grown and we have continued to invest more. Because we received so many applications from deserving projects, PSABC gave more than the \$20,000 budgeted for the program every year. So earlier this year, our Board of Directors made the commitment to formally raise our grant budget. Then we were contacted by The Biltmore Company and from their interest in investing in the program, the matching challenge at the Time Traveling Gala was born.

I’ve never been more proud of a program than our Preservation Grant Program, but there is more work to be done. Our goal of reaching rural communities has been challenging and we need to find more diverse methods of spreading the word about the program.

As of today, we have granted \$144,000 to 38 projects and I can truly say that this program is one of our most powerful preservation tools. Thank you to everyone who has supported this program. We will work hard to continue to grow its reach in the coming years.

Sincerely,
Jessie Landl
Executive Director

PRESERVATION
SOCIETY OF
ASHEVILLE
AND BUNCOMBE CO.

OUR MISSION To conserve Asheville and Buncombe County’s heritage and sense of place through preservation and promotion of the region’s historic resources.

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FALL 2023 PRESERVATION GRANTS *continued*



St. Matthias Episcopal Church



Violet Hill Cemetery



Biltmore Industries Homespun Museum

BRICKS-AND-MORTAR:
St. Matthias Episcopal Church
\$5,000 for gutter replacement at St. Matthias Episcopal Church.

St. Matthias has been developing a comprehensive drainage and grading plan to help preserve the historic church building. As they move forward with planning a larger, comprehensive project, installing new gutters and downspouts on the building will help stop water intrusion. We are excited to continue to support this phase of their project and are thrilled about their continued efforts to save this significant historic landmark.

From the application: St. Matthias was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. It is believed to be the oldest Black congregation in Asheville, established initially as a Freedman’s Church in 1867. It was the location of the first school for Blacks in Asheville, beginning in 1872, and as far as we know was the only school for Blacks in the city until the first public school opened in 1885. The current church was built in 1892-94 by formerly enslaved master brick mason and congregant James Vester Miller, who went on to build the Asheville Municipal Building and other prominent public structures in the city. His descendants are active in the church today.

BRICKS-AND-MORTAR:
Violet Hill Cemetery
\$5,000 for installing a new entrance gate at Violet Hill Cemetery.

Violet Hill Cemetery is significantly important as the primary burial place for African Americans, beginning in 1932 because of segregation. Last year, the existing gate at the main entrance broke, which caused the cemetery to suffer the theft of maintenance equipment. We are happy to fund a new, lockable gate, which will prevent further vandalism and allow for this historic site’s continued maintenance and protection.

From the application: Violet Hill Cemetery was established by Dr. L.O. Miller in 1932 to provide the underserved Black community with an affordable, decent facility to bury their loved ones during segregation, when options were limited. At the time, Riverside Cemetery had only a very small section reserved for Black burials, and the South Asheville Cemetery was filling up, so Violet Hill filled an important need.

Today Violet Hill Cemetery holds over 5,000 graves that include a “Who’s Who” of individuals who contributed to the betterment of our Black and Brown communities. Some are recognized as the first Blacks to hold positions of significance in their respective professions or career. Our graves include such notables as James Vester Miller, E.W. Pearson, Clifford Cotton, Dr Lee (of Stephens Lee High School), Mr. and Mrs. McQueen, Ernest Willis Gatewood (a pro basketball player), and many other community activists and Black leaders.

BRICKS-AND-MORTAR:
Biltmore Industries Homespun Museum
\$5,000 for the maintenance, repair, and upgrade of the Biltmore Industries Homespun Museum.

Biltmore Industries is important to the history of Asheville, and its Homespun Museum is a gem. The museum is in need of basic maintenance, which includes interior painting, electrical upgrades, and installation of climate control systems. These projects will allow the museum to (1) improve the conservation and preservation of its collection; (2) improve visitor experience and education; (3) improve accessibility and safety for visitors; and (4) increase visibility to create more revenue for the museum. We are excited to be a part of helping preserve this historically significant place.

From the application: Biltmore Industries was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. We are historically connected to The Cathedral of All Souls, the Biltmore Estate and the Grove Park Inn. These are important connections that we do our best to maintain and educate visitors about. Beyond that, we represent a span of textile history that encompasses 18th and 19th century technology that was still in use in the 20th century. Because Biltmore Industries utilized ancient and modern techniques and was in operation from early 1900 to early 1980, there is so much history wrapped up in the inner workings. From dye chemical technology improvements, workplace law and safety changes, continuing production during the two World Wars, and converting from steam power to DC and then AC power - our museum is a treasure trove of information. ☘

GRANT PROGRAM

More Information About Our Preservation Grant Program

We look forward to helping with emergency stabilization projects and restorations of important places, to helping neighborhoods receive designations such as recognition on the National Register of Historic Places and to encouraging and supporting new and unique education and research opportunities. We want to be surprised and humbled by the projects our community asks us to support!

As our city faces the inevitable challenges of growth, PSABC’s voice and reach must expand. The important addition of this Preservation Grant Program comes in response to the needs of our community.

In 2024, we are offering up to \$50,000 in grants (individual grants will be from \$500 – \$5000) to the public in three categories:

- 1. BRICKS AND MORTAR**
Rehabilitation, restoration and repair of structures that are 50 years of age or older.
- 2. PUBLIC EDUCATION**
Development of educational materials and programs that advance knowledge of our shared history.
- 3. PLANNING, SURVEY & DESIGNATION**
Planning and design for building rehabilitation and restoration projects, historic resource surveys and local or national designations.



YOUR 2023 DONATIONS TO PSABC

As holiday decorations proliferate, so do charitable appeals. Remember to include PSABC!

We hope it is clear how active PSABC is and how much good we do with our small, dedicated staff.

PSABC never provides tax advice, but many generous givers follow their tax advisors’ recommendation to donate appreciated stocks, bonds, mutual funds and other securities by direct transfer from their brokerage accounts to PSABC’s. Contact Amy Hornaday at amy@psabc.org for wire instructions to our brokerage account if you plan to contribute this way. ☘

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED!



We are happy to announce the donation of preservation easements on the Historic Weaverville Colored School

The Historic Weaverville Colored School is a two-room school building constructed in 1925, but the history of the school pre-dates this building. Public schools for white and Black students were established in Buncombe County in 1886. In 1898, the Reems Creek Township No. 10 Public School Committee of Buncombe County purchased property between Reems Creek Road and Hillside Street from D. H. and Eliza J. Regan for a public school for the “Colored Race.” A one-room schoolhouse was constructed on the property and opened in ca. 1900. Over the next twenty-three years, the schoolhouse underwent various repairs and received the old desks from the white Weaverville elementary school. In 1923, the Buncombe County Board of Education began considering constructing a new school building to replace the one-room schoolhouse but plans for a new building were delayed until 1925.

In 1925, the County Board of Education began taking steps to replace the ca. 1900 one-room schoolhouse. In January, the Superintendent authorized the preparation of an application for a \$3,000 loan from the State Loan Fund to construct a new Weaverville Colored School building. It is assumed that the Board of Education received the loan because, by June, the Board hired architect Thomas Edwin Davis to develop plans and specifications for the new school building and supervise the construction of the building. When Davis was hired, he was working on other schools for the County Board of Education. Throughout July, the Board of Education approved the plans for the new Weaverville Colored School building and awarded the contract to construct the new two-room school building to W. V. Henry for \$2,568. Construction of the new school building began a short time later on the same site as the original school. The new two-room school building opened ca. 1926. It is assumed that the original one-room schoolhouse was sold because the Buncombe County Board of Education authorized the sale of the building.

First through seventh grade students in the northern portion of the county, including Weaverville and as far away as Barnardsville, attended the school. Throughout the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s, Monnie Jones and Amanda Horne were the teachers at the Weaverville Colored School (it could have been later, but documentation of the teachers during the 1940s and 1950s has not been found). By 1941, the school’s bus driver was Preston Carson.

In 1949, a Buncombe County Grand Jury Committee condemned three county schools and cited deficiencies in other schools throughout the county. The three schools noted as being in “especially deplorable” condition included the Anderson School, the Hemphill School,

and the Weaverville Colored School. These three buildings were in poor condition, and the school toilet facilities were in especially poor condition. The desks, chairs, tables, blackboards, and library equipment were worn, dilapidated, and insufficient in quantity. Shortly after the Grand Jury Committee, the Buncombe County Board of Education started to make plans to close the Weaverville Colored School. In 1952, parents and community members petitioned the Buncombe County Board of Education to allow the school to remain open. Still, the Board did not act on the petition, and the Board continued with the plans to close the school. In the fall of 1953, the two-room Weaverville Colored School closed, and the students were sent to Shiloh Elementary, located in South Asheville.

The school building got a second life in 1956. The Town of Weaverville started a project to convert the Historic Weaverville Colored School into a community center for the African American community. The Town leased the building from Buncombe County. They then began renovating it, which included replacing broken windows, removing partitions to create one large room, installing a heating system, regrading the grounds around the school, and laying grass seed around the site.

In October 1962, the building was almost lost. There were plans to expand and relocate Reems Creek Road through the site of the Historic Weaverville Colored School, which would lead to the demolition of the school building. Instead of demolishing the Historic Weaverville Colored School, it was decided by December to move the school to a new location to allow for the expansion and relocation of Reems Creek Road. The Town of Weaverville purchased Lot 49 and a portion of Lot 50 on Hillside Street from Lee M. and Ruby C. Gilmore for the building’s new location in January 1963. By July, the historic building was moved 200-feet up Hillside Street to the new lot, which is where it is currently located.

The Historic Weaverville Colored School continued to function as a community center – the Hillside Community Center – until at least the 1990s, when it was closed due to budget cuts (the exact date the community center closed has not yet been found). The Little Mount Zion Baptist Church leased the Hillside Community Center after it closed and purchased the building from the Town in 2004.

The Little Mount Zion Baptist Church is the current owner of the Historic Weaverville Colored School and use the building as a fellowship hall and community center for the church and the larger community. They have founded a committee to rehabilitate the building to save its important story for future generations. ☘

SOME WAYS YOU CAN HELP

Do you have photographs of the Historic Weaverville Colored School or Hillside Community Center?

Give us a call at 828-254-2343. We are looking for historic photographs to continue to document this building’s important history.

Make a donation to rehabilitate the Historic Weaverville Colored School through PSABC!

Just note 'Historic Weaverville Colored School' on your donation.

Historic Resources Commission - What’s Their Role Exactly?

The Historic Resources Commission of Asheville & Buncombe County (HRC) was created in 1979 through local ordinances adopted by both Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Commission in 1979 pursuant to NC General Statutes for preservation commissions. The joint city/county commission consists of twelve members, with six appointments from both the city and county. All members have equal voting rights and serve three year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. Officers of the commission are elected amongst themselves.

The HRC is charged with preserving and protecting the cultural and architectural character of Asheville and Buncombe County. In addition to reviewing proposed projects affecting locally designated historic properties, the HRC is responsible for local historic district and landmark designation, as well as advisement on properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The HRC also functions as an educational resource within the community, and strives to foster Asheville’s unique sense of place through its preservation efforts.

At their regular monthly meetings, the HRC spends most of their time and efforts on reviewing requests for Certificates of Appropriateness (CA) for projects within the four locally designated historic

districts (Albemarle Park, Biltmore Village, Montford, and St. Dunstons), as well as for the 50 local historic landmarks within the city and county (like Walton Street Park & Pool and Thomas Wolfe Cabin). The CA or design review process is for the purposes of ensuring that a given proposed project is consistent with applicable design standards in order to maintain and preserve historic character. CA review typically concurs with review for any other required permits. If you are considering a project and are unsure of whether or not a CA is required, you can contact City staff: 828-259-5638 or acole@ashevillenc.gov. For any other permit related questions, you can contact the planner of the day hotline: 828-259-5450 or pod@ashevillenc.gov

If you're curious about the preservation program, and the various types of historic designations, CA review process, local historic landmarks, or just want to view the HRC's regular meeting schedule, we would encourage you to visit the HRC's website: ashevillenc.gov/hrc for more information. City staff are always happy to talk with community members to provide technical preservation advice, assist with getting an application for design review submitted, and to act as a resource on any general questions about the historic preservation program and its role in the community. ☘



HISTORIC
RESOURCES
COMMISSION

Preservation News

Local

THE REMEMBRANCE PROJECT RECEIVED FUNDING FROM AMERICORP’S SEPTEMBER 11TH DAY OF SERVICE FUNDING

Asheville - Land of Sky Regional Council was awarded \$338,209 from AmeriCorps for “The Remembrance Project,” which will help identify, map, protect, and preserve African American cemeteries in Western North Carolina. The Project will bring together stakeholders to identify sites and develop resources to protect African American cemeteries in perpetuity. In addition, the effort seeks to mobilize established community and university groups to initiate an oral history project profiling African American families whose ancestors are buried in these, sometimes forgotten, burial grounds.

YMI CULTURAL CENTER RECEIVES FUNDING FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS

Asheville – YMI Cultural Center received a grant from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Action Fund gave \$3.8 million in grant funding to protect and preserve 40 sites representing African American history. The Young Men’s Institute was the nation’s first free-standing Black cultural center and has been a cultural hub for Asheville’s African American community since it opened in 1893. The Grant will provide for the restoration of its original wood flooring and historical elements as well as repainting the building’s interior.

State

BENJAMIN BRIGGS NAMED PRESIDENT AND CEO OF PRESERVATION NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh – Benjamin Briggs joined Preservation North Carolina as the new president and CEO in August. Briggs holds a master’s degree in preservation studies from Boston University, restored houses in High Point, NC, and taught historic preservation at Randolph Community College for five years. He stepped down from his teaching position in 2003 to serve as executive director of Preservation Greensboro Inc. He now steps into this new position at Preservation North Carolina.

BUYING TIME FOR HERITAGE: HOW TO SAVE AN ENDANGERED HISTORIC PROPERTY, SECOND EDITION IS NOW AVAILABLE.

North Carolina – This guide is by J. Myrick Howard and builds on his decades of historic preservation experience to provide readers with legal, financial, political, and technical tools and strategies to be more effective preservationists. The book is fully revised, updated and expanded to include new details, and examples.

National

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND IS CURRENTLY UNAUTHORIZED

Washington, DC – On May 15th, H.R. 3350, the Historic Preservation Fund Reauthorization Act, was reintroduced to Congress. The bill would reauthorize the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for ten years and increase its authorization from \$150 to \$250 million annually. This would be the first increase to the HPF’s authorized funding level since the program’s inception in 1976. Increased authorization would improve the ability of SHPOs and THPOs to fulfill their federally mandated requirements under NHPA, create efficiency in project review, and create well-paying jobs. The longer the HPF remains unauthorized, the more uncertainty it causes for states and tribes that rely on this funding, and the more it undermines the longstanding commitment of Congress to the preservation of our historic resources.

NEW NATIONAL MONUMENT TO HONOR EMMETT TILL AND MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY

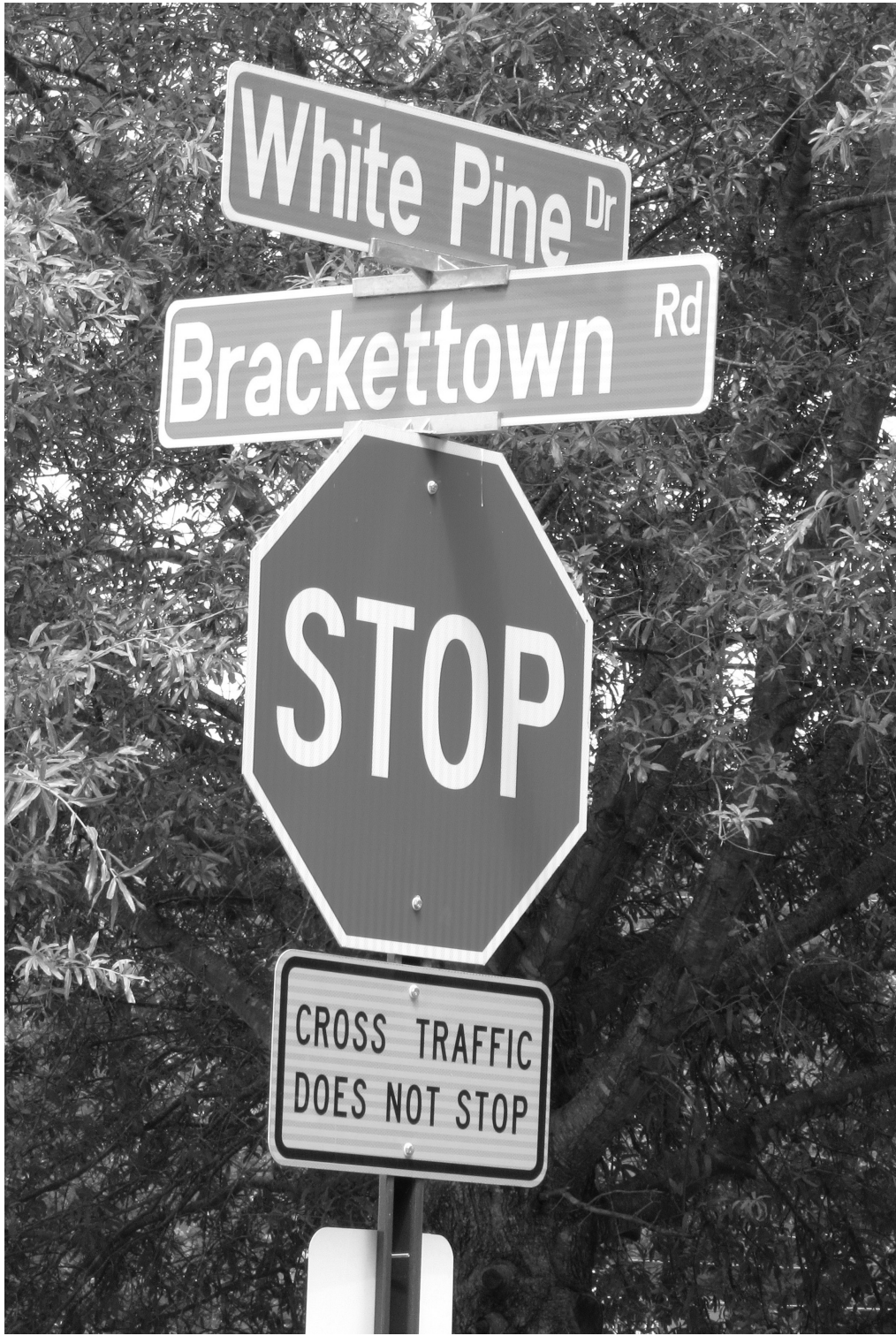
Mississippi and Illinois – President Biden established the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument as America’s 425th National Park on July 25, 2023, the 82nd anniversary of Till’s birth. The new national monument includes sites in the Mississippi Delta and Chicago that were central to Emmett Till’s lynching and funeral, the acquittal of his murderers, and the subsequent activism by his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley. These sites include the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, Tallahatchie County Courthouse, and Grabball Landing in Mississippi, and Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Chicago, IL.



PRESIDENT BIDEN DESIGNATES NATIONAL MONUMENT NEAR GRAND CANYON

Arizona – President Biden designated nearly 1 million acres of existing federal lands north and south of the Grand Canyon as the Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. The lands have long been considered sacred by several Tribal Nations and contain numerous natural, scientific, cultural, and historic resources. The new monument contains over 3,000 known cultural and historic sites, including 12 properties on the National Register of Historic Places. ☘

Ben Ragsdale’s Brick House on Brackettown Road



By Dale W. Slusser
Architectural Historian

Many Asheville residents, like me, have passed this street sign at the intersection of White Pine and Brackettown Roads at the north entrance to Asheville Mall, and asked the question- “Where is Brackettown”? This is especially perplexing because this “Brackettown Road” merely and ONLY leads into the mall. A study of old newspaper articles, deed descriptions, old plats and maps, old documents and old photos reveals the answer! And the answer not only leads us to Brackettown, but also to Ben Ragsdale’s brick house in the heart of Brackettown.

I had discovered the existence of Brackettown Road before I noticed the street sign. A few years back, while researching for a yet to be written book about the “forgotten” houses along the Swannanoa River corridor, I discovered a description of this area during the 1890’s, in the recollections of “Aunt Grits”, Margaret Davis Goodale, who had grown up on the farm in this area. Margaret’s father, Edwin Paschal Davis moved his family to Asheville in 1884 and purchased the Dr. John B. Weaver farm of 192 acres, which included the area now occupied by Kenilworth Lake, Kenilworth Forest, the Asheville Mall and part of the Kenilworth neighborhood to the west. Margaret was born in 1885 on this farm, shortly after the family had arrived.

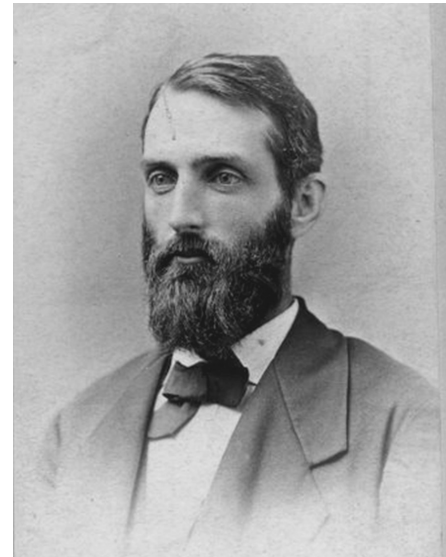
“Aunt Grits” in her recollections gives us a good description of this area- (I have added modern geographical names in brackets):

“The house where I was born was about 3 miles from Asheville, N. C. and a little over a mile from the small town of Biltmore where we went for mail, ice and a few items of food and household supplies. Biltmore was also a train stop where we met passengers and picked up freight packages. Leaving Biltmore to get to our house we would cross the Swannanoa River on a high iron bridge (recently built to replace one washed away by a flood) then turn east following up the river on a fairly good (depending on the season of the year) dirt road [Swannanoa River Road] for about a mile, passing one house [“Azalea”-Trescott House]. A narrower road [Patton Farm Road] turned off [to the left], leading through a field, crossing a brook [Ross Creek], and plunging into a dark, wild beautiful glen where the brook rushed over rocks, and rhododendrons grew thick and lush, -- then out, -- and there was our house! The family

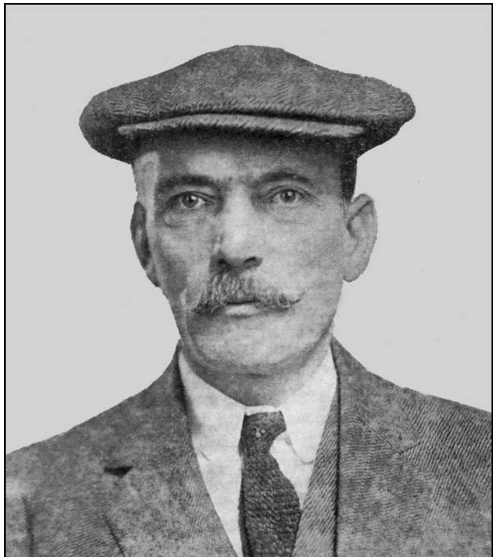
named it “Tanglewild” on account of the rhododendron thicket.

Beyond the house a lovely valley [Ross Creek Valley] widened out toward the north, nearly a mile long to the east of this were low hills and to the west a mountain ridge – “Beaumont” – (“Beaucatcher” to many of the local people) – beyond which was Asheville. The brook [Ross Creek], which flowed along the western edge of the meadow, came down from the hills far to the north [Town Mountain at Chunn’s Cove] and was normally a delight, but thunderstorms occasionally cooked up a “fresht” and the brook would become a roaring torrent, even overflowing the meadow to the detriment of some of my father’s best crops. The road [Patton Farm Road] crossed the brook close to our house. Through a “ford” for horses and carts, with a foot-bridge for pedestrians, then skirted the east side of the meadow, ambled up a hill where our second house [named Crowhurst] was later built and finally joined another road [Beaucatcher Road] which climbed over Beaumont to Asheville.

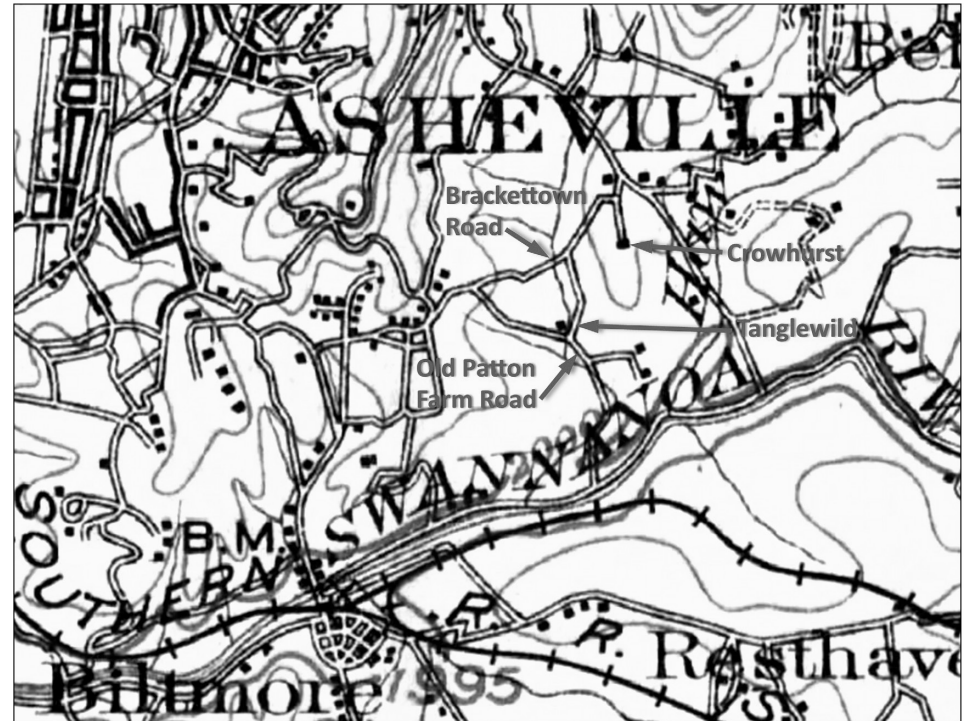
Apparently “Aunt Grits” didn’t remember Brackettown Road, which started at the top of the hill where their road, later called Patton Farm Road, met Beaucatcher Road, which is now the intersection of White Pine and Tunnel Road. Perhaps Brackettown Road was even then not an oft-used road-path. Both roads were unpaved dirt roads. And actually, the northern part of “their road” up to Crowhurst was the eastern section of Brackettown Road. The earliest map that I have found which shows these two roads crossing the Daveses’ Tanglewild property is the U. S. Geological Survey Topographical map of 1901. Both roads, as well as Tanglewild and Crowhurst, though



Edwin Paschal Davis



Willie Park, Jr.



“Aunt Grits” Davis describes “their road” (later called Patton Farm Road) as coming up from the Swannanoa River Road, then passing in front of Tanglewild, and crossing a ford at “the brook” (Ross Creek) where it then “skirted the east side of the meadow, ambled up a hill where our second house (Crowhurst) was later built and finally joined another road which climbed over Beaumont to Asheville (Beaucatcher Road)”. She doesn’t mention Brackettown Road, as the family probably never used it. But both roads, as well as Tanglewild and Crowhurst, though unlabeled, do show on the U. S. Geological Survey Topographical map of 1901. I have labeled them here for clarity, and for your convenience.

unlabeled, show on the 1901 map.

For another written description of Brackettown Road (also often called Ross Creek Road), I’ve found a description by a noted local 1930’s historian:

“For many years the road from upper Swannanoa country came across Christian Creek and across the Swannanoa River at Gudger’s Ford and then by the present Oteen and along the ridge north of the Swannanoa River through the Beverly Hills property and on that ridge and down it, crossing the Haw Creek near the Haw Creek public school building and on to Joyce store where it turned to the west and crossed Ross’s Creek where Kenilworth Lake is now and on through Fountainbleau and Brackettown to the entrance of Kenilworth Road into Biltmore Avenue...”

This is a translated description for modern readers:

“For many years the road from upper Swannanoa country [Swannanoa and Black Mountain] came across Christian Creek and across the Swannanoa River at Gudger’s Ford [concrete bridge on Tunnel Road just before Riverknoll Drive] and then by the present Oteen [VA Hospital] and along the ridge north of the Swannanoa River through the Beverly Hills property [approximately following Tunnel Road- US 70] and on that ridge and down it, crossing the Haw Creek near the Haw Creek public school building [intersection at Tunnel Rd. and S. Tunnel Rd.-above Asheville Mall] and on to Joyce store [southeast corner of White Pine Drive-at “Cookout” restaurant] where it turned to the west (at the start of White Drive) and crossed Ross’s Creek where Kenilworth Lake [and Kenilworth Forest] is now and on through Fountainbleau [across Normandy Road & Duke Street off of Kenilworth Rd.] and Brackettown [starting on the east at Applegate Lane and crossing the middle of South Asheville to Thurland Avenue] to the entrance of Kenilworth Road [Forest Hill Drive] into Biltmore Avenue.

As the main section of Brackettown Road went right through the middle of the E. P. Davis property, the fate of the road was dependent on the fate of the Davis property. As eluded to in “Aunt Grits” recollections, the Davis property was split in two in 1889, when Davis built a new family home, named “Crowhurst”, up on the hill northeast of Tanglewild. At that time Davis sold Tanglewild and surrounding 70 acres of the original 192-acre farm to Charles Benedict.

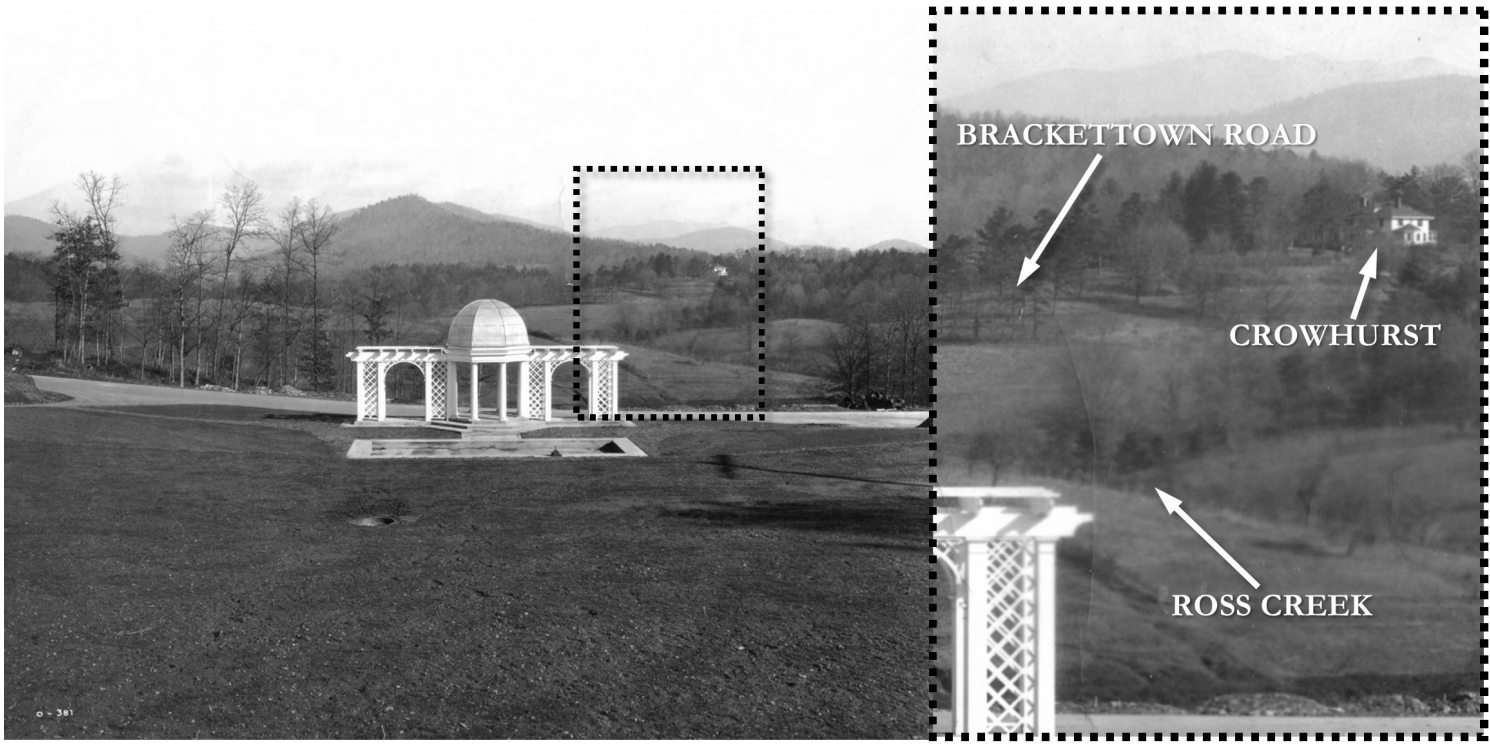
In 1900, Benedict sold the Tanglewild farm to what would be its last owners, Erwin W. Patton, and his wife Ellen. Meanwhile, the Davis family moved to their new home on the hill (now the site of the Asheville Mall), where they lived until E. P. Davis’s death in 1908. In 1910, the Davis heirs sold the 125-acre “Crowhurst” property to Dr. Henry H. Briggs. Dr. Briggs was a successful Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist who had his residence and practice on Haywood Street (this site later became the George Vanderbilt Hotel in 1926 and is now a senior-citizens apartment building). Dr. Briggs bought “Crowhurst” as his country residence.

The demise of Brackettown Road started in 1916, when Erwin Patton decided to sell a portion of his land (46 acres) to the Happy Valley Company. In 1916, in conjunction with the rebuilding of the Kenilworth Inn (the original Inn had been destroyed by fire in 1910), a syndicate of Asheville businessmen, formed the Happy Valley Company for the purpose of building the Happy Valley Country Club. The rebuilding of the Kenilworth Inn and the redevelopment of the mostly failed original 1896 Kenilworth Park subdivision, had begun in 1912, through the efforts of Jake M. Childs, a tireless Asheville “booster” who had interested outside investor B. C. McVey “and his associates” to form the Kenilworth Development Company. The Kenilworth Development Company bought out the interests of the “old companies”, the Kenilworth Land Company and the Kenilworth Company.

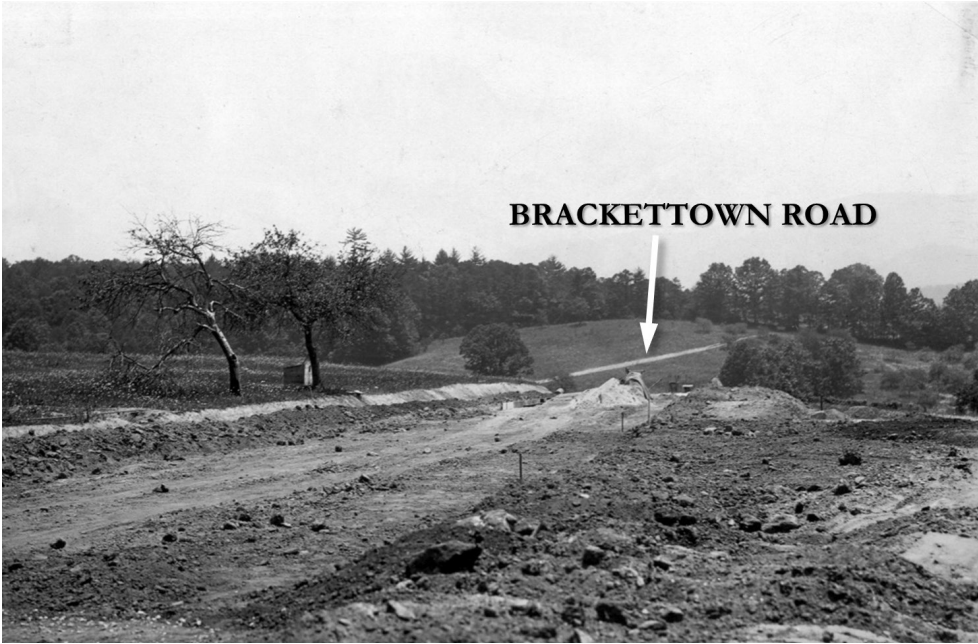
In the Spring of 1917, a few months after Dr. Briggs sold his portion of the Patton farm property to the Happy Valley Company, the Pattons sold the remainder of the Patton farm (Tanglewild) to Paul Roebling for \$12,000. It was unclear what Roebling was planning to do with his new property, whether he was planning a new residential park or an extension to the golf course?

Among the officers, and prime motivators, of the Happy Valley Company, were Kenilworth developers, Jake M. Childs, E. G. Hester and R. A. Wilson. The Happy Valley Country Club was organized a few months later, to build an eighteen-hole golf club, to be built on the former Davis/Patton property. The new golf course, which was to include two small lakes, was designed by Willie Park, of New York, who was at that time, “one of the most noted golf course architects in the world”. Willie Park, Jr. was born in Musselburgh (near Edinburgh) Scotland, to noted golfer Willie Park, Sr. Willie Park, Jr. originally made his name as a Scottish professional golfer, winning the

This photo of the original “Greek pavilion” on the northern end of Kenilworth Park, off of Chiles Avenue, was taken before the Happy Valley Country Club was planned. The area beyond the upper right of the pavilion (shown as insert, above right) was the proposed site for the Happy Valley Country Club. “Crowhurst” shows on the hill northeast of the proposed site. All the land beyond and immediately behind the pavilion, would eventually become an extension to the Kenilworth development.



This photo shows a group of six men on horses riding up and down a dusty road, surveying the Patton Farm before the building of the dam and lake. This photo notes that the group is made up of some bankers, and officials of the Kenilworth Development Company. Jake Chiles is the only person identified in the photos. Although it's not specified which road in the Ross Creek valley they were on, from the landscape and grade I suspect that they were on Patton Farm Road, which came up along Ross Creek from the Swannanoa River Road and joined with Brackettown Road.



Identified only as an “unpaved road of the Kenilworth residential development”, which I believe to be of the construction of Beverly Road (now called Sheridan) just before it turned into Arlington Circle (now Plymouth Circle) during the 1925 Kenilworth Park extension. The photo was taken from the southwest looking northeast across the Ross Creek valley, above the Kenilworth Lake inlet. Across the valley beyond, shows a graded but unpaved road, which I believe to have been Brackettown Road, coming down the east bank of the valley and across the meadow.

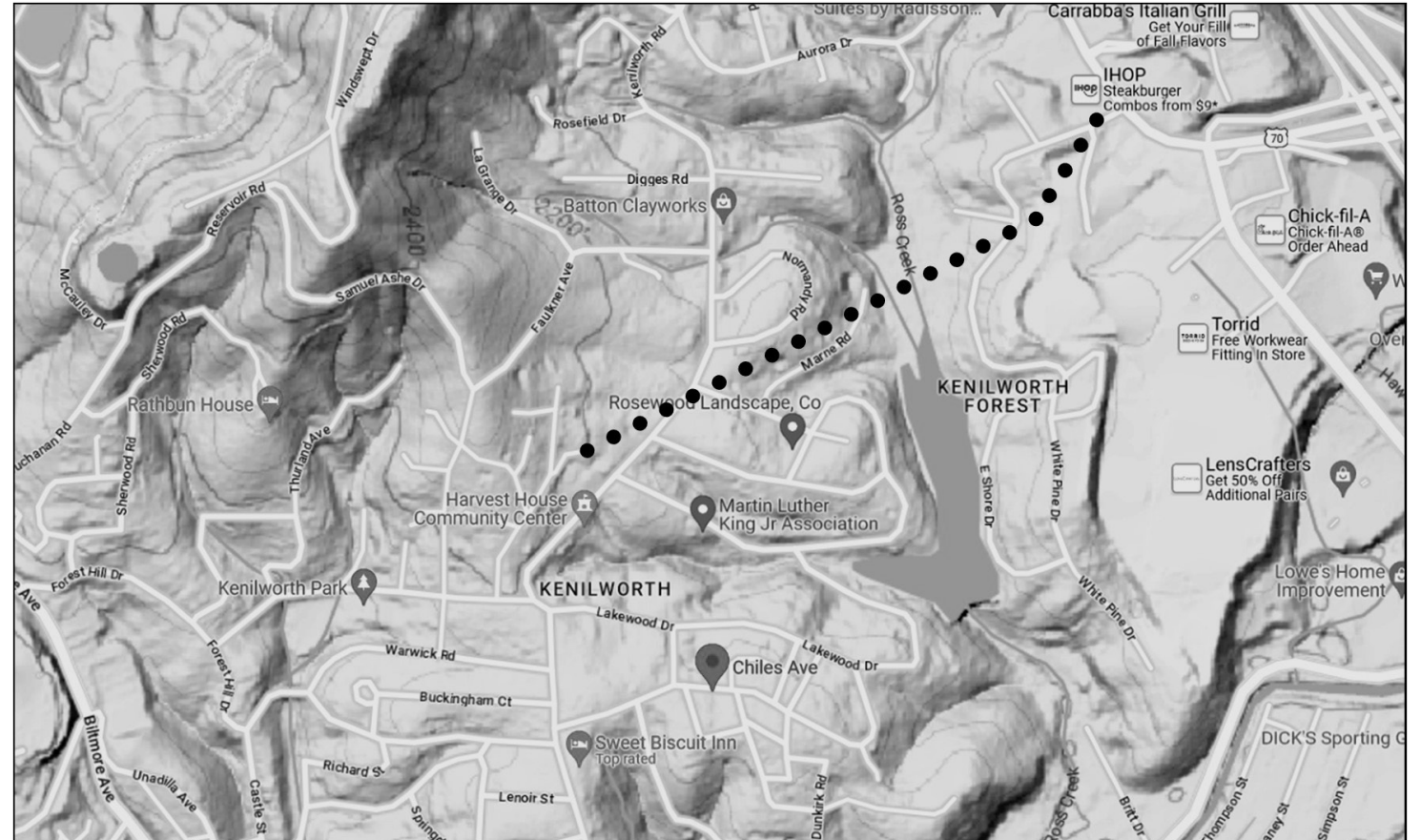
Open championship in 1887 and again in 1889. As professional golfing at the time was not a lucrative business, Park also joined the family business, manufacturing golf clubs and balls. In 1896, Park published The Game of Golf, the first book ever written by a golf professional. However, Willie Park, Jr. would become a world-famous golf-course designer, who by the time of his death in 1925 had designed close to two hundred golf courses in the United Kingdom, Europe and North America. Park was near the end of his career when he designed the Happy Valley Golf Course.

Despite all the hype, and despite having the golf course designed and grading begun, the start of the Great War in 1917 caused the development of both Happy Valley Country Club and the new Kenilworth Inn to flounder. Fortunately for the Kenilworth Inn, the government stepped in and purchased the nearly completed Inn as a soldier's hospital. However, work on the golf course had stalled. And even despite a 1918 plea by concerned individuals for the raising, through public subscription, of the \$5,000 needed to finish the golf course for the use of the “officers, doctors, nurses, and patients of the hospital”, the Happy Valley Country Club, failed to become a reality. In late 1918, at a foreclosure sale by the Wachovia Bank, against a deed of trust secured originally by the Happy Valley Company in 1916, Dr. H. H. Briggs, in an effort to get back his investment, bought back his portion of the Davis/Patton property which he had originally sold to the Happy Valley Company in 1916. In 1919, at an additional foreclosure sale, Dr. Briggs also bought the property that Erwin Patton had initially sold to the Happy Valley Company in 1916. This gave Dr. Briggs ownership of all the lands of the failed Happy Valley Country Club.

Although the Happy Valley Country Club seemed to be the final threat to Brackettown Road, the road's final demise was soon to follow. In March of 1923, a small article appeared in the Asheville Times, announcing the following:

“Consideration is being given to a plan for constructing a lake in Chunn's cove, on the property of Dr. H. H. Briggs and the Kenilworth Development company, in the south end of the valley, it was learned today. The proposed lake would cover about 40 acres of land and include construction of a dam...”.

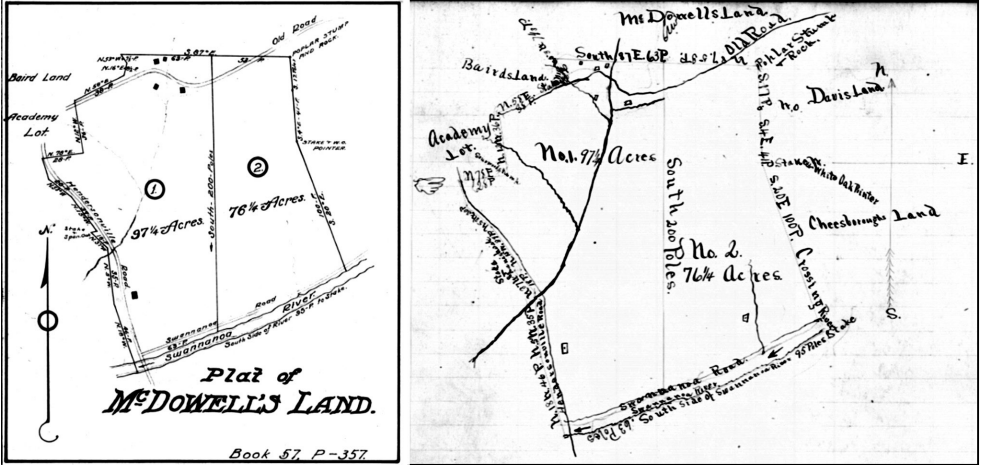
In conjunction with the development of the lake, and to add to the final demise of Brackettown Road, the Kenilworth Realty Company also began an expansion of the Kenilworth Park subdivision, to the northeast of Chiles Avenue, on a 40-acre tract of the former Erwin Patton farm. This expansion included an extension of Lakewood Drive, and the current streets of Waverly Road, Sheridan Road, Plymouth Circle, and Duke Street (these streets were first called, Essewan Street, Beverly Road, Arlington Circle, and Duke Street). Construction of the new “Kenilworth Lake” did not begin until the Fall of 1924. In August 1924, the Kenilworth Development Company, in advertising for their new lakeshore development,



On this image of the 2023 Google® terrain map, I have drawn a dotted line showing the path of the former Brackettown Road. The road ran from Beaucatcher Road (now Tunnel Road) west across Ross Creek valley and up into Kenilworth at Fountainbleau (Normandy Road), and across to join with Dalton Street in South Asheville. A new road called Applegate Lane, just off of Dalton Street where Brackett Road connected to Dalton Street, now follows a portion of the former right-of-way of Brackettown Road (also called Ross Creek Road).

announced that: “The conversion of “Happy Valley” into a shining lake of crystal water will begin in the next two or three weeks-actual work on the dam will start sometime in early September.”

By the start of 1926, the dam had been completed and the lake was just about filled. In February of 1926, Dr. H. H. Briggs, along with E. E. Reed, and Ruffner Campbell, formed the Kenilworth Lake Company. Although their charter seemed to indicate that they were a real estate company, and although they purchased the lake and surrounding acres, including the 35 acres on the east side of the lake, the company did little development except to maintain and manage Kenilworth Lake. In fact, by the time of Dr. Briggs' death in 1931, he had bought out his two partners, and the Kenilworth Lake Company and its property became part of his estate. Excepting the actual lake, the property was not developed until 1944, when a group of Asheville men formed a new company called, Kenilworth Properties, Inc. which purchased the lake and property from the Briggs estate. Kenilworth Properties subdivided the property on the east side of the lake and built “Kenilworth Forest”, which was developed along a new street called Tunnel Road, at the eastern end of the old Brackettown Road. Brackettown Road was forever cut off, and in fact the remaining portion of road, labeled as Brackettown Road, was actually originally the driveway into “Crowhurst” from the



The western portion of Brackettown Road is clearly marked on an 1887 plat, mistitled, “Plat of McDowell's Land” (top left). This recorded plat was a retracing of the sketch plat in a deed of commissioners who were tasked with settling the estate of William H. & Margaret Rossell, the then owners of this property (called “Swannanoa Hill”). The original sketch plat in the 12-page Rossell deed (top right) included the names of “adjacent property owners”, one of which was W. W. Dowell, who owned the land north of the Rossell property. The clerk tasked to draw the registered plat, mistook the adjacent property owner labeled “McDowell's land” (perhaps because it was at the top in larger script) as the title of the property instead of merely the name of an adjacent property owner. Nonetheless, both plats clearly show Brackettown Road, called “old Road”, coming in from the McDowell lands and dipping down into the Rossell property before exiting to the west, north of the Newton School and cemetery, through the “Baird's lands” (Forest Hill) before intersecting into Biltmore Avenue.

old Brackettown Road. “Crowhurst” was eventually demolished in the early 1980's when the property was sold to the developers of the Asheville Mall.

It is from this period (1924-1926), during the building of Kenilworth Lake and the Kenilworth Park extension, that we have any photos that show Brackettown Road. Because construction of the lake and the Kenilworth Park extension had already begun, we only see remnants of the former road. These photos come from the Chiles

family scrapbook, which chronicled (though only sporadically) the building of the lake and the residential extension. The first two photos show a group of six men on horses riding up and down a dusty road, surveying the Patton Farm before the building of the dam and lake. The photos note that the group is made up of some bankers, and officials of the Kenilworth Development Company. Jake Chiles is the only person identified in the photos. Although it's not specified which road in the Ross Creek valley they were on,

continued on the next page

Brackettown *continued*

from the landscape and grade I suspect that they were on Patton Farm Road, which came up along Ross Creek from the Swannanoa River Road and joined with Brackettown Road further north. Both roads, as seen in this photo, were fairly wide and graded, but unpaved.

The one photo that most clearly shows a portion of the old Brackettown Road, is from the same collection of photos showing the building of the lake and the residential extension. Identified only as an “unpaved road of the Kenilworth residential development”, from comparison with other contemporary photos, I believe the photo to be of the construction of Beverly Road (now called Sheridan) just before it turned into Arlington Circle (now Plymouth Circle) during the 1925 Kenilworth Park extension. The photo was taken from the southwest looking northeast across the Ross Creek valley, above the Kenilworth Lake inlet. Across the valley beyond, shows a graded but unpaved road, which I believe to have been Brackettown Road, coming down the east bank of the valley and across the meadow. Because of the perspective of the photo, from atop a bluff, what doesn't show is that Brackettown Road continued west up the west valley bank and across the then yet undeveloped Kenilworth Park neighborhood of Fountainbleau, just north of this phase of Kenilworth Park.

On an image of the 2023 Google® terrain map of Asheville, I have drawn a dotted line showing the path of the former Brackettown Road. The road ran from Beaucatcher Road (now Tunnel Road) west across Ross Creek valley and up into Kenilworth at Fountainbleau (Normandy Road), and across to join with Dalton Street in South Asheville. A new road called Applegate Lane, just off of Dalton Street where Brackett Road connected to Dalton Street, now follows a portion of the former right-of-way of Brackettown Road (also called Ross Creek Road).

The western portion of Brackettown Road is clearly marked on an 1887 plat, mistitled,

“Plat of McDowell's Land”. This recorded plat was a retracing of the sketch plat in a deed of commissioners who were tasked with settling the estate of William H. & Margaret Rossell (W. H. passed away in 1885 and Margaret in 1886), who were the owners of the property which would later become Kenilworth and part of Brackettown. The original sketch plat in the 12-page Rossell deed included the names of “adjacent property owners”, one of which was W. W. Dowell, who owned the land north of the Rossell property. The clerk tasked to draw the registered plat, mistook the adjacent property owner labeled “McDowell's land” (perhaps because it was at the top in larger script) as the title of the property instead of merely the name of an adjacent property owner. Nonetheless, both plats clearly show Brackettown Road, called “old Road”, coming in from the McDowell lands and dipping down into the Rossell property before exiting to the west, north of the Newton School and cemetery, through the “Baird's lands” (Forest Hill) before intersecting into Biltmore Avenue. Both plats also show structures on each side of the “old road”. The structures and most of the lands north of the road on the Rossell lands, had already been sold off to Brackettown residents, such as Thomas Randall and Ferdinand Neighbors (Nachbar), although their deeds of property were recorded later as ipso facto.

So, we know that Brackettown Road stretched from Beaucatcher Road (Tunnel Road) west to Biltmore Avenue, and assuming that the road was named for “Brackettown”, it begs the question, “Where was Brackettown?” Brackettown, which was also sometimes called Clayton Hill or Claytontown, was at the time, an African American community within Kenilworth Park (as it was bordered by Kenilworth Park on three sides). The boundaries, though unofficial, roughly were: Brackettown Road (Wyoming Road) on the south, Forest Hill Road on the west, Kenilworth Road on the east (although that section of Kenilworth Road did not exist until 1926), and what is now Beaucatcher Heights on the north (although a few of the

original tracts from Brackettown encroach into the new Beaucatcher Heights). So, then the next question that begs an answer is, “How did Brackettown form and develop into a community?”

Asheville had several African American communities that developed after the Civil War during the decades of legalized segregation (which sadly and shamefully lasted for almost a century). Most, if not all, of these communities, in Asheville, centered around and on land that had formerly been used during slavery to house their enslaved servants. I mention this only because, as

in the case of Brackettown, it's difficult to know when these communities actually began, as evidences seem to indicate that many of the residents were occupying their land predating their official deeds of transfer, and also, because this is important to know as we're finding that many of the original residents of these communities purchased their lands from their former “owners”, indicating that many of the original residents had prior familial connections to each other, having lived together as a community prior to owning their own properties.

the article continues online

To read the rest of this article or see the full story of Ben Ragsdale's Brick House on Brackettown Road, and to see more “Architectural Tidbits” go to the “Education” tab on the Preservation Society of Asheville & Buncombe County's website: psabc.org . The direct link to this article is: psabc.org/ben-ragsdales-brick-house-on-brackettown-road/



Montreat Stewards *Judge Knight's Written Ruling Released*

In our last newspaper, we announced a Buncombe County Superior Court win for the Montreat Stewards in their fight against the development of a hotel in place of three historic lodges, however, at the time, we were still waiting for the release of the judge's written ruling. In September 2023 the Superior Court of Buncombe County released the written decision by Judge Peter Knight, concluding that:

- 1) the process violated constitutional rights, because it lacked an impartial decision-maker,
- 2) the Montreat Retreat Association (MRA) presented testimony that was not competent nor trustworthy; it was an error in law for the Montreat Board of Adjustment (BoA) to include in its deliberations,
- 3) the BoA's decision “was not supported by competent, material, and substantial evidence.”

Judge Knight also noted that the Zoning Ordinance does not allow another principal building to be constructed on the proposed lot. Even if they could overcome the above quite significant problems, the law clearly prohibits construction of a new lodge or hotel in the place where the three historic lodges now stand.

While the town of Montreat has decided not to appeal this latest ruling, the MRA has announced that they will be moving forward with an appeal

PSABC continues to fear the demolition of the historic lodges and urges the MRA to work toward an alternate design that would allow for the rehabilitation of the existing structures. ☘

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PSABC HOLIDAY PARTY

December 7th, 5:30 PM
Historic Manor Inn, 265 Charlotte St., Asheville

As an annual tradition, the members and guests of the Preservation Society gather together to socialize, discuss events of the past year and drum up ideas for the year to come. True to our cause, we search for significant historic architecture to host this fun event and this year is no exception!

This year we are gathering at the historic Manor Inn at 165 Charlotte Street. Special thanks to Tom and Lyn Leslie for hosting us!

Food, refreshments and holiday cheer provided by PSABC.

Word Search

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Basilica of Saint Lawrence
Cathedral of All Souls
Battery Park Hotel
Sawyer House
Raoulwood
St. Matthias
Jackson Building

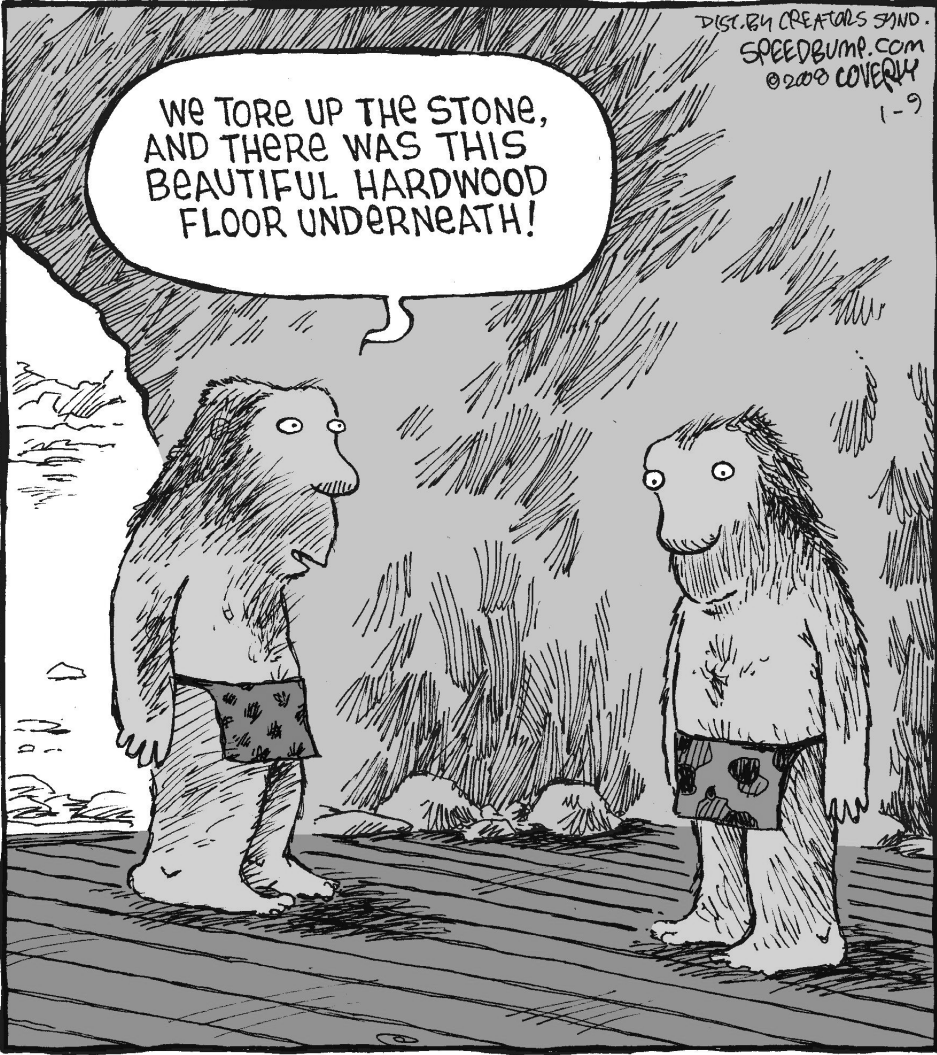
Judge Adams House
Biltmore
Manor Inn
Young Men's Institute
First Baptist Church
Grove Arcade
Ravenscroft

UPCOMING EVENTS

- DEC 7.....Holiday Party at The Manor Inn
- JAN 18.....My Adopted Aunts: Eleanor Vance, Charlotte Yale, & Biltmore Industries
- FEB 17-18.....Arts & Crafts Home Tour



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